

TW Local Plan Examination

Matter 8: Site Allocations - Newport

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Introduction

1. This Statement focuses on site Allocation H13 – indicated in Local Plan (LP) Appendix D as Land South of Springfield Industrial Estate, Station Road, Newport, Shropshire with a residential capacity of 120 dwellings.

Question 1) Are the allocated sites appropriate and deliverable, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure and facilities, and taking account of environmental constraints?

2. The answer to this question in respect of H13 is yes.
3. Following expansion of Newport and Church Aston in the 1960's and 1970's, there has been relatively limited residential redevelopment or investment within the town. Development in the intervening period has largely been directed towards Telford and surrounding areas of Wellington and Oakengates. In 2007 the Telford and Wrekin Towns' incentive was introduced as a means of directing major investment toward market towns such as Newport. This has given rise to some redevelopment focused around the canal, the lower bar of the High Street area and providing some new housing. However, the level of development achieved within Newport in no way resembles the investment that has been required and could have been delivered.
4. Reflecting this restricted growth of the town, house prices in the town are the highest in the 'TF' post code area, (including the towns of Telford and Market Drayton). The house prices are also amongst the highest in the county due to the town's high desirability arising from the good local education establishments and easy commuting links to Birmingham, Telford, Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford. In addition to which very limited new employment land attractive to the market has actually been delivered.
5. Part of the reason for this lack of investment has been the lack of any long term development plan for the town. Whilst the adopted Core Strategy provides a general policy base, this did not allocate any land for development and only extended to 2016. The subsequent Site Allocations DPD, did not progress beyond the Preferred Options Stage. In addition, the Wrekin Local Plan is now time expired (though a number of policies were saved by a direction from the Secretary of State in 2007) and no site specific allocations (**Appendix 1**) have been forthcoming for Newport through the Local Development Framework process. This has resulted in the necessity for planning applications to come forward at Newport along with the emergence of the new Local Plan strategy.
6. In relation to site allocations, the site (H13) has a lengthy history including previous planning proposals for a new superstore to serve Newport and a separate but related proposal for a petrol filling station. The retail application, following an undetermined Public Inquiry and very significant delays, was subsequently withdrawn. A planning application for 120 dwellings (TWC/2015/0057) has subsequently been submitted on the site by St Modwen Developments Ltd, consistent with H13. This responds to baseline environmental surveys and assessments and the resulting identification of opportunities and constraints. All substantive site specific issues relating to infrastructure, facilities and site environmental constraints have been addressed.

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7. The site is immediately adjacent to a wider urban extension of Newport, which extends the settlement edge to the A518 (TWC/2011/0871 for 'up to 350. dwellings; extra care; 4.5ha of employment land (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8); public open space and landscaping provision including sports pitch and landscaped park; demolition of existing industrial buildings; highway works and associated infrastructure development'). This has been resolved to be approved and is proceeding through the S106 process. A plan showing the relationship between the two sites is provided at **Appendix 2**. It should be noted that land to the immediate east of the site (on the opposite side of Station Road) has consent (subject to a S106) for Shropshire Homes and land to immediate north (on the former recycling depot) has a planning application for residential development which it is understood is likely to go to committee in November. H13 is therefore effectively bordered on all 4 sides by housing development (either existing or approved).
8. The relationship with the wider scheme is of significance and to ensure that the current scheme would correspond with the wider development, the siting of land uses and in particular the ability for the open space proposals for both sites to link together has carefully been considered. In addition, the same roundabout access scheme is proposed off Station Road to serve both proposals. Therefore there will be no restriction to delivering either proposal.
9. It has been suggested that the site (H13) is of some importance for open space purposes. However, the site (H13) which covers an area of 4.56ha is used as agricultural land and a horse paddock, with a small copse located in the north of the site. A public right of way and hedgerow crosses the site (Hutchison Way), which can be assimilated within the development layout where appropriate.
10. It should be noted that a Village Green Application for the site was made on the 16 December 2011 by Mr J. Rudd on behalf of local residents. A non-statutory inquiry in respect of the proposal for Village Green status took place in October 2012. The Inspector, in his report dated 18 January 2013, recommended that the Village Green Application should be rejected by the Registration Authority, concluding that:

"...the Applicant has failed to prove his case and that none of the Application Land qualifies for registration as a town or village green under section 15(2) of the Commons Act 2006. It has not been shown that a significant number of the inhabitants of any locality or any neighbourhood within a locality indulged in lawful sports and pastimes as of right on the Application Land or any part of it for a period of at least twenty years, and continued to do so at the time of the Application."
11. The site was originally included in the planning application for the wider outline application, but was subsequently amended to separate out the retail component of the scheme. H13 therefore represents a filling in of a scheme which is already committed and therefore appropriate and deliverable, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure and facilities, and taking account of environmental constraints. Overall, there is no evidence that would otherwise prevent development of site H13.
12. H13 assists with meeting the spatial strategy for Newport with a key objective for Newport based around a strategy of consolidating and strengthening Newport's role as a market town through

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achieving an appropriate balance between the quantity and type of employment opportunities¹. Achieving this objective involves maintaining an important employment/commercial base which exists (via Policy EC 1) along with new employment provision via E27.

13. The importance of providing an appropriate level of deliverable employment land for Newport was also acknowledged by the Core Strategy Inspectors (paragraph 3.52) back in 2007 when they commented on the high levels of out commuting from Newport. Reference (paragraph 3.56) was also made by the Inspectors to the extension of the existing Local Plan employment allocation off Audley Avenue. Concerns expressed that Newport was overly reliant upon retail employment and that the existing industrial employment base off Audley Avenue required greater investment through a strategic approach to the town's growth.

"Whilst [H4] makes clear at ¶7.15 that the council will also be supporting an increase in the amount of available employment opportunities within the town and that this will take the form of an extension to the existing allocation between Audley Avenue and the A518 and the introduction of a mix of uses on some development sites, this intention has not found its way into Core Strategy policy, either in CS2 (Jobs) or CS6 (Newport). Without such a parallel emphasis on employment at strategic level, the regeneration of Newport would appear to be largely dependent upon the retail sector in the form of secondary development following an increase in population: a strategy which, on the evidence of past experience, would be unlikely on its own to be effective."

14. The Core Strategy Inspectors' Report went on to comment (paragraph 3.57) on the need for additional employment land to improve the balance of proposed housing with employment and to support Newport's role as a market town.

"Explicit reference should therefore be made in the CS to the strategic intention to improve the employment base of Newport through the allocation of additional land and by other means."

15. The area to the south of Newport represents the most logical approach to assist with delivering the Vision for the Town, as also stated in response to Question 2. This builds on the need to deliver a sustainable economy through the retention of a strong mixed employment/commercial base centred at the commercial area at Audley Avenue Business Park Area as correctly identified through Policy EC 1 – Strategic Employment Areas (see Proposals Map). This retention enables delivery and expansion in this area through the continued growth in the agri-tech and high value manufacturing sectors, assisted by the areas proximity and relationships with the Harper Adams University College Agri-engineering centre.
16. The plan appropriately retains this area for retention for B Class employment needs (acknowledging some existing/consented non B-class uses which exist) and any redevelopment proposals would essentially be a Development Management matter to consider as appropriately indicated and required through paragraph 4.1.1.5 of the Local Plan.
17. Overall, the allocated sites, with particular reference to H13, are appropriate and deliverable, having regard to the provision of the necessary infrastructure and facilities, and taking account of environmental constraints.

¹ Local Plan paragraph 3.2.2.2.

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Question 2) Is the overall site selection methodology robust and transparent?

18. H13 is consistent with the borough-wide distribution strategy of the plan in focusing growth at Telford and Newport, being the Borough's two urban areas. Technical Paper – Housing Delivery (B2b) identifies the approach to the preferred sites and reasonable alternatives which were assessed. Within this, H13 is identified in Table 5, with the site meeting the requirements of the 'Strategic Fit' in Table 1 and the major constraints criteria within Table 6. The site has then been appropriately assessed through the integrated Sustainability Appraisal (A3A) site 520 on page 117, as part of the wider outline site.
19. It is observed that the site (520) scored well against the SA objectives. In relation to the four areas where major negatives apply, two of these (SA Objectives 25 and 8) apply to any urban extension to Newport. The other two relate to Objective 10 (over 800m from Newport Town Centre and barriers to movement). The route from the Station Road (H13) site is direct and legible, via Station Road and Upper Bar along an active street, with interesting and largely complimentary architecture along the route. The route is lit with footpaths along the entire way² and represents a distance of 653m from the site edge to the edge of Newport Town Centre (designated Primary Shopping Frontage). In RPS view arguably, the SA objective for H13 should be awarded a major positive score against this objective.
20. In relation to the other major negative for site 520 (SA Objective 22 (contributions to CO² emissions) with the site being between 10-500 dwellings it should be scored as a minor negative (for consistency purposes). In addition to which, the consented proposals for the adjoining land³, includes a new/diverted bus service with a frequent/direct service to the Town Centre providing the potential for significant reductions in CO² emissions compared to alternative/smaller locations which do not provide for such public transport improvements.
21. Whilst the above would appear to indicate that the SA score/assessment for site 520 is a more positive one than indicated in A2, RPS does acknowledge the SA assessment process must be based on planning judgement and conform to a consistent approach. Overall, the SA and supporting evidence base for the site selection of H13 and the revised settlement boundary in this location is therefore both robust and transparent.
22. For ease of reference and to assist the Inspector attached at **Appendix 3** is a plan illustrating the principal commitments/sites at Newport. As stated above and identified on Appendix 3, through the Development Management process the Council has already taken the view that growth to the south of Newport represents a logical location for expansion of the town. The basis for this approach can be summarised below:
 - Land to the south of the town is exceptionally well contained by virtue of the construction of the A518 which forms a natural well defined southern extent of the town – acknowledging the expansion proposals for employment site E27;
 - The location allows for utilisation of existing road infrastructure with direct connections from the A518 (to both parcels of land - east and west of Station Road) and

² Consented proposals for the wider Station Road scheme involve extending the pedestrian footpath to the edge of site H13 along Station Road.

³ Application TWC/2011/0871 – subject to a resolution

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new/extended public transport provision connecting this area with the town centre and wider areas of Newport;

- The area has been assessed as having land parcels of low landscape cultural sensitivity and acceptable in broad landscape terms and land predominantly in agricultural use being an area of low ecological value⁴;
- Allows extension of the open space area around Milwood Mere to create a continuous expanse of parkland to the south of the town, including the land to the north of H13 around the Hutchinson Way;
- Mixed use proposals for the site (520 – includes Site Allocation H13) allow for new “fit for purpose” employment land and buildings with direct access from the A518 and synergy with the existing Audley Avenue employment area & the proposed new employment land to the south of the A518, being well related to market requirements⁵; and
- Allows for residential proposals to integrate with the existing residential community to the south of the town (around Church Ashton/Audley Avenue) with good access to existing schools on the south side of the town.

23. In broad terms, during the plan period it is acknowledged that due to the historic core of Newport the ability for strategic scale employment and housing growth to take care through intensification is not possible and a point acknowledged by the Core Strategy Inspector back in 2007⁶. The A41 to the east of the town is a strategic highway network (Birkenhead-Liverpool-Wolverhampton) and represents a very strong, logical defensible boundary, beyond which exist known sand and gravel deposits. To the north of the town the landscape is of a higher sensitivity (see footnote 3 above) and access to local facilities (school, shops) more constrained by the Shrewsbury to Newport Canal), to the west of the town issues of potential coalescence with the village of Edgmond exist along with extensive tracts of land identified for minerals safeguarding⁷.

24. The evidence base therefore fully justifies strategic scale growth to the south of Newport and within this H13 is entirely suitable as a residential allocation, located within an existing and consented residential environment, being entirely deliverable during the plan period.

⁴ Figure A1& A2- C3e-ii

⁵ Ref page 17 Economic Development Strategy – page 17 (C1d) .

⁶ Para 3.49 of the 2007 I.R.

⁷ Local Plan Policy ER2 - Map 4 – Page 144

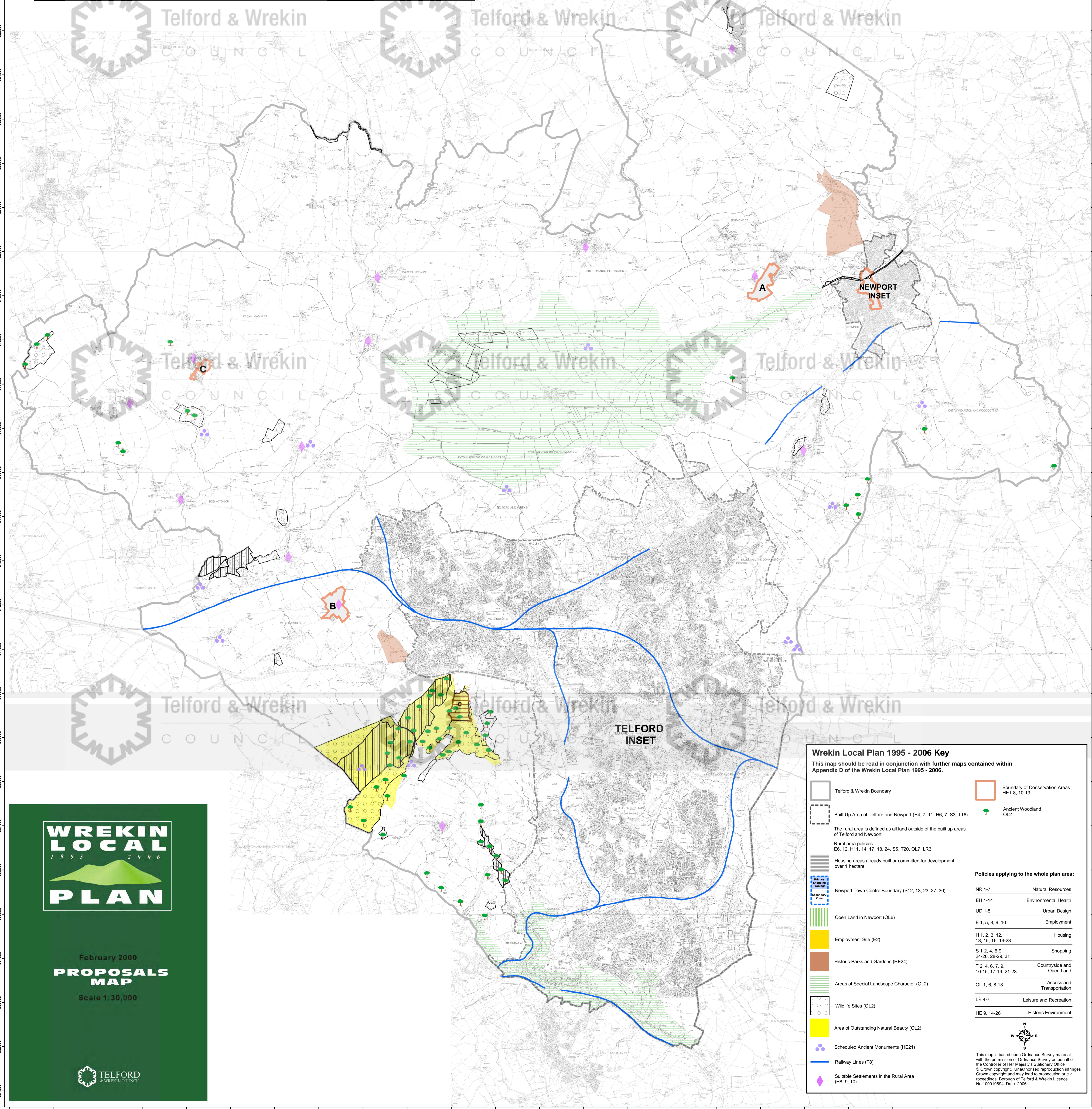
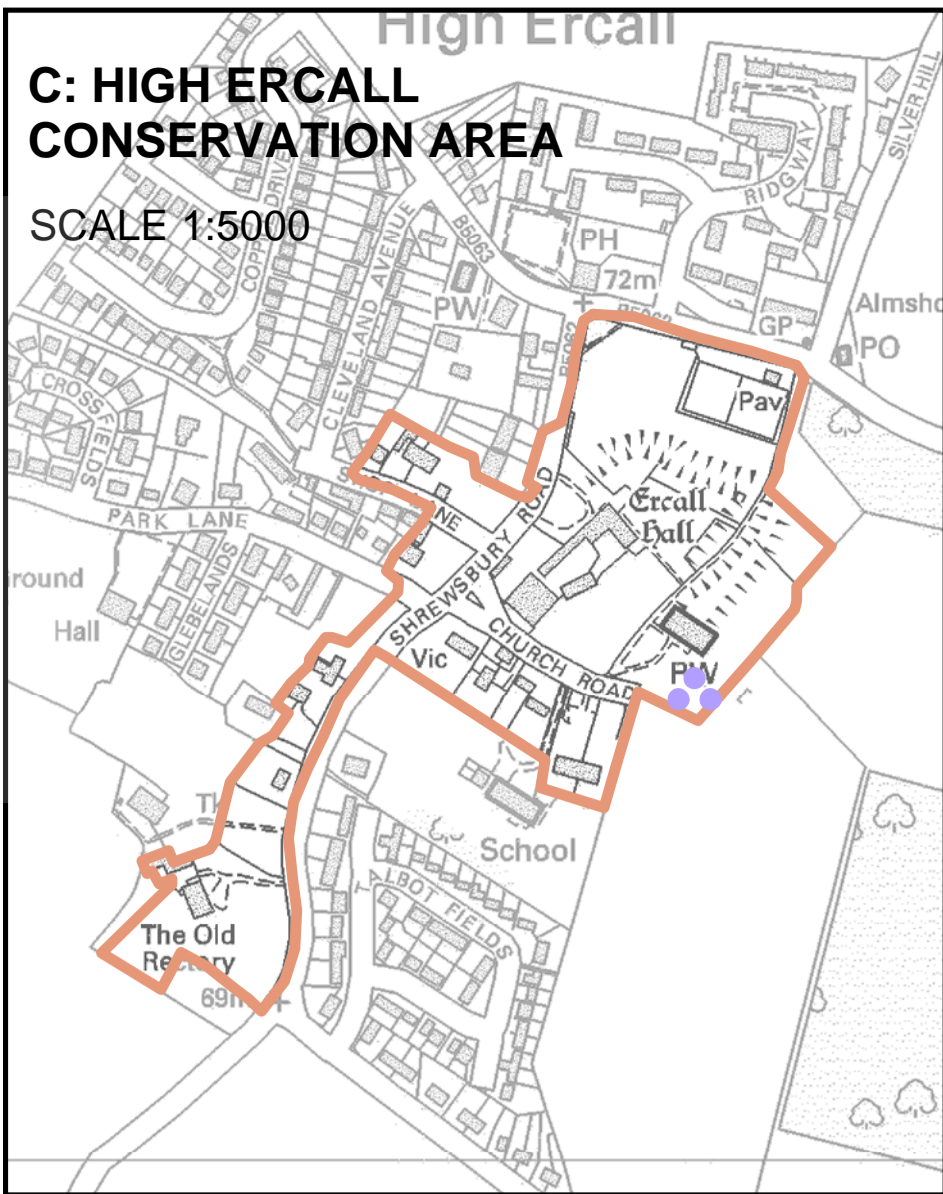
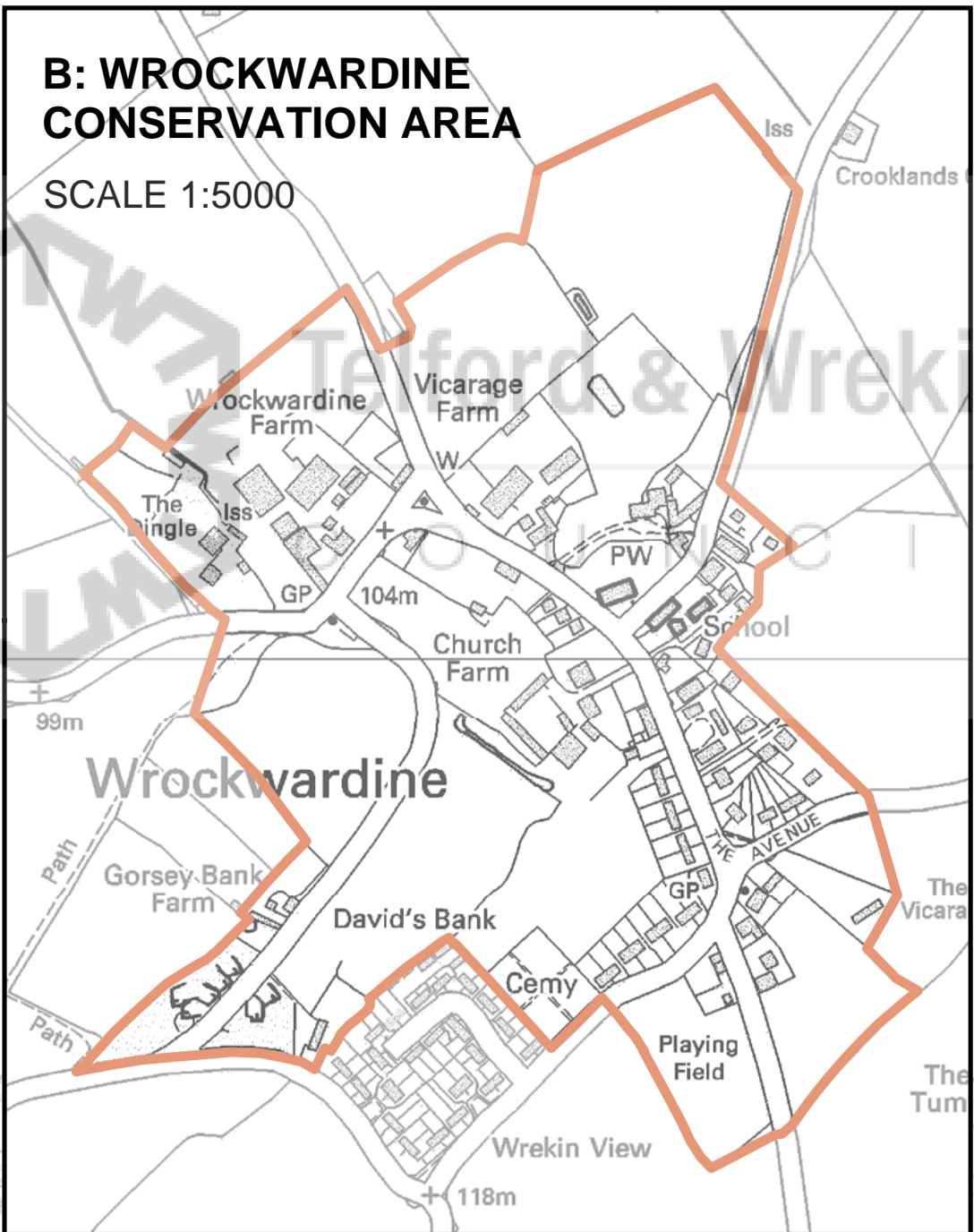
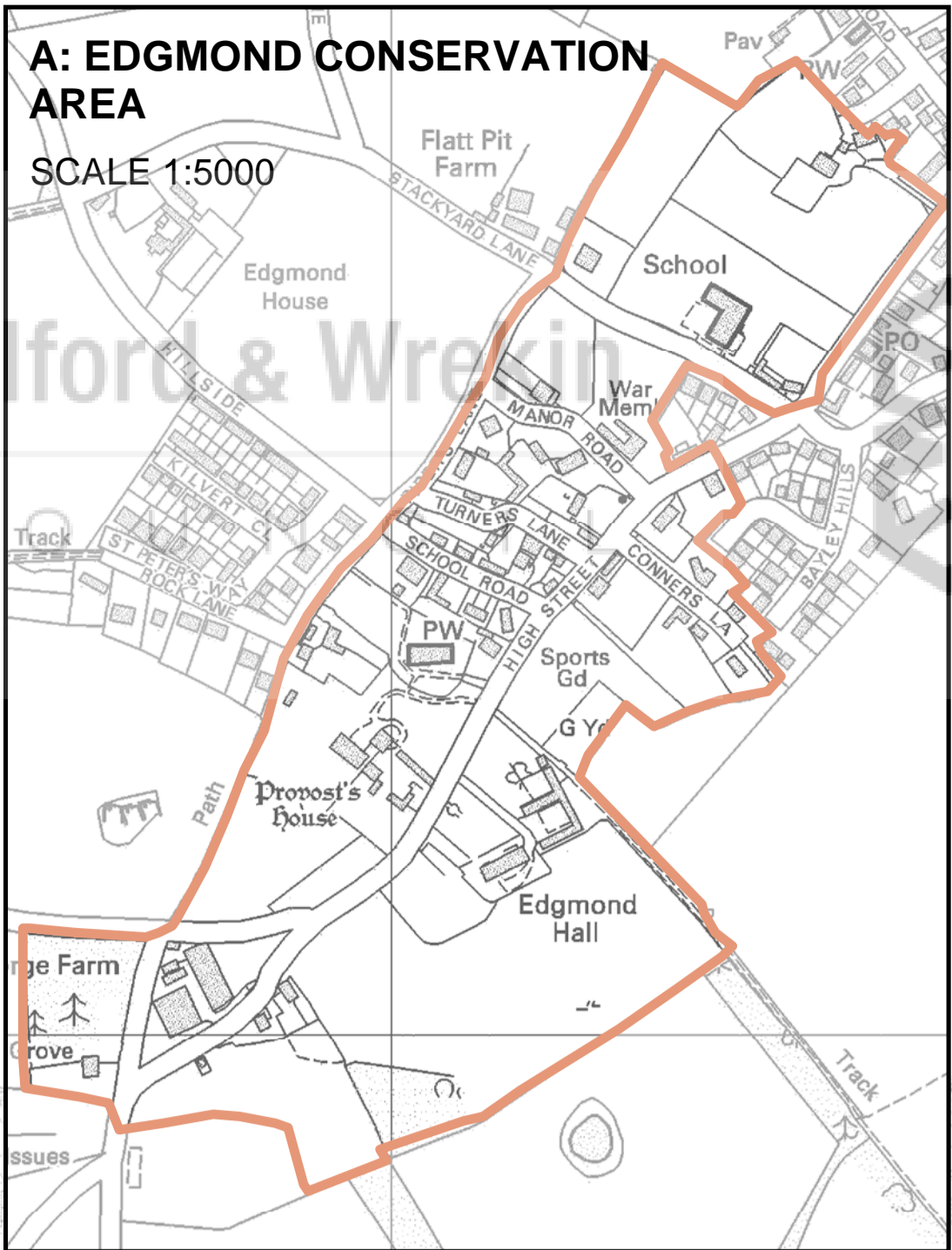
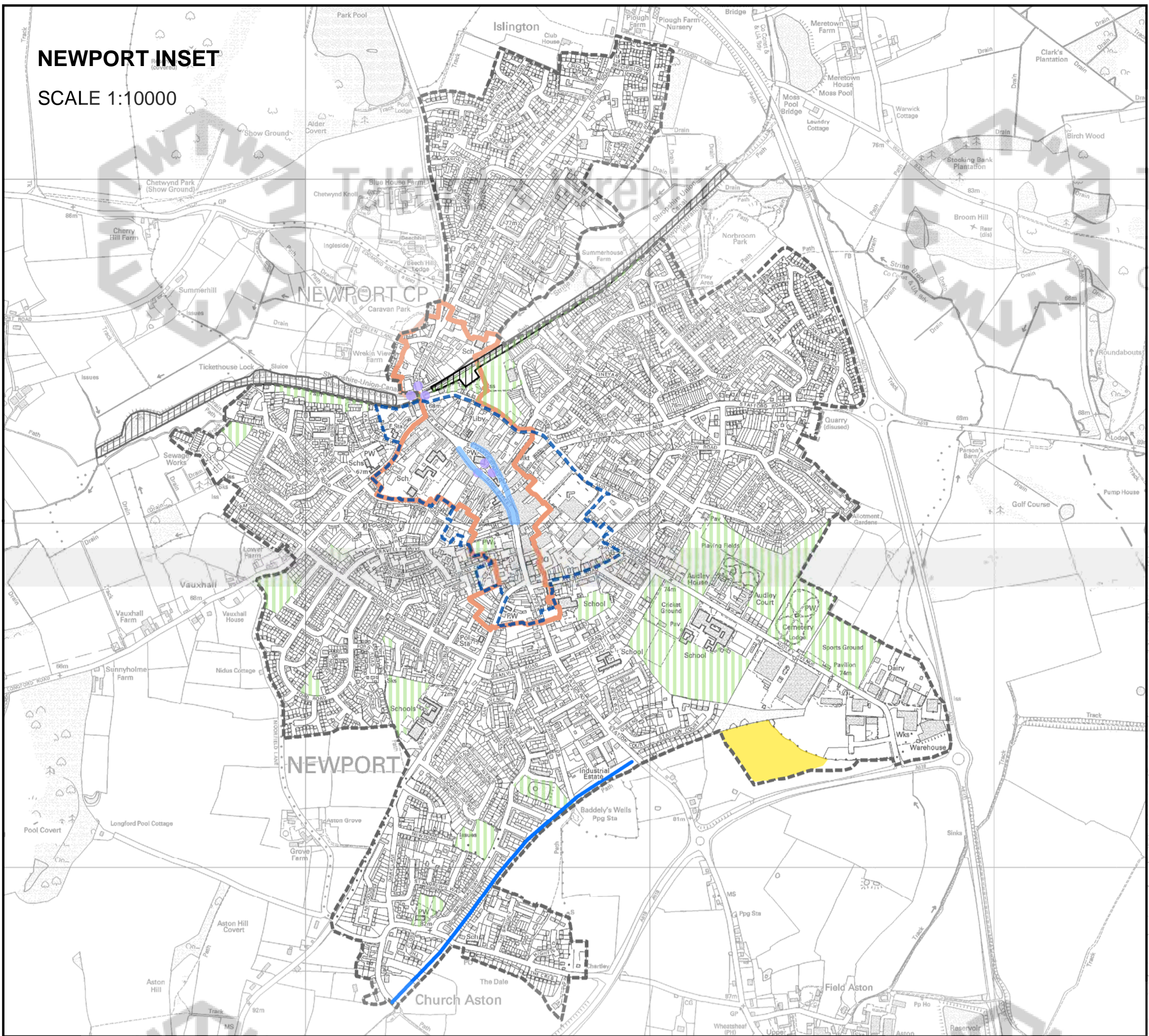
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Question 3). Are relevant development requirements for the site allocations, in particular the Sustainable Urban Extensions proposed at Donnington & Muxton (H1) and Priorslee (H2), clearly set out and sufficiently justified? *[Inspector's note: The Council should refer in particular to PPG paragraph 12-010-20140306 which states that "Where sites are proposed for allocation, sufficient detail should be given to provide clarity to developers, local communities and other interests about the nature and scale of development (addressing the 'what, where, when and how' questions)".]*

25. Specifically in respect of Site Allocation H13 the relevant development requirements are allowed for in the Plan. This site is not strategic in scale, representing approximately only 1% of the total housing supply and therefore mindful of the same advice in NPPG that 'all Local Plans should be as focused, concise and accessible as possible', it is considered that sufficient control and detail is already provided through other policies within the plan to enable an assessment through the development management process.

APPENDIX 1

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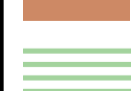

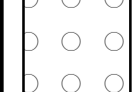
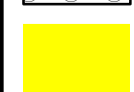
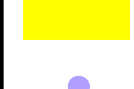
WREKIN LOCAL PLAN
1995 - 2006

PLAN

February 2000
PROPOSALS MAP
Scale 1:30,000

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

Wrekin Local Plan 1995 - 2006 Key
This map should be read in conjunction with further maps contained within Appendix D of the Wrekin Local Plan 1995 - 2006.

	Telford & Wrekin Boundary		Boundary of Conservation Areas HE1-8, 10-13
	Built Up Area of Telford and Newport (E4, 7, 11, H6, 7, S3, T16)		Ancient Woodland OL2
	Rural area policies E6, 12, H11, 14, 17, 18, 24, S5, T20, OL7, LR3		
	Housing areas already built or committed for development over 1 hectare		
	Newport Town Centre Boundary (S12, 13, 23, 27, 30)		
	Open Land in Newport (OL6)		
	Employment Site (E2)		
	Historic Parks and Gardens (HE24)		
	Areas of Special Landscape Character (OL2)		
	Wildlife Sites (OL2)		
	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (OL2)		
	Scheduled Ancient Monuments (HE21)		
	Railway Lines (T8)		
	Suitable Settlements in the Rural Area (H6, 9, 10)		

Policies applying to the whole plan area:

NR 1-7	Natural Resources
EH 1-14	Environmental Health
UD 1-5	Urban Design
E 1, 5, 8, 9, 10	Employment
H 1, 2, 3, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19-23	Housing
S 1-2, 4, 6-9, 24-26, 28-29, 31	Shopping
T 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10-15, 17-19, 21-23	Countryside and Open Land
OL 1, 6, 8-13	Access and Transportation
LR 4-7	Leisure and Recreation
HE 9, 14-26	Historic Environment

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APPENDIX 2



APPENDIX 3

